among WTO Members on, inter alia, the length of the plan, it was agreed to conclude the consultations.

Subsequently, Australia, Canada, the European Communities, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States of America, requested consultations with India under Article XXII of the GATT 1994 and the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes. Pursuant to these consultations agreement has been reached with Canada, the EC and Switzerland in respect of the time-scheeules for the elimination of these quantitative restrictions on imports. Negotiations towards a mutually satisfactory solution with Australia and New Zealand are in an advanced stage. At the request of the USA, a panel has been constituted on 18 November, 1997 to examine the US allegation that the continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions on import by India is inconsistent with India's obligations under the WTO Agreement.

These restrictions are proposed to be eliminated in a phased manner so that the interests of the domestic industry are protected. Simultaneously, efforts are being made to improve productivity of Indian industry and to enhance overall competitiveness. Safeguard measures to protect domestic production, such as protection through tariffs, anti-dumping measures, countervailing measures to offset the effect of unjastifiable subsidies and safeguard measures to prevent damage to domestic production through surge in imports, are proposed to be utilised effectively.

Review of performance o f Export Promotion Councils

663. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) various export promotion councils presently operating in the country for export promotion of commodities and functions of such councils;

(b) whether performance of these ex port promotion councils has been critical ly reviewed recently for the last three years;

(c) if so, details of the performance council-wise in terms of set norms of assessment;

(d) details of fresh initiative taken/ proposed during 1997-98 for restructuring the functioning of various export promotion councils strengthening the network to cater to the interests of exporters more effectively; and

(e) details of proposals received from Government of Maharashtra in this regard and action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) A total of 20 Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) arc there, out of which 11 councils came under the purview of Ministry of Commerce and the remaining 9 fall under the purview of Ministry of Textiles. A list of all these EPCs is enclosed as Statcment-I. *(See* below) Their main function is to promote and develop the Exports of the Country. These functions are reflected in Statement-II. *(See* below).

(b) and (c) The performance of these councils is reviewed on a regular basis and wherever necessary the required remedial action is taken.

(d) No specific decision has been taken for restructuring the functions of various Export Promotion Councils. However, ef forts are made from time to time to further strengthen these Councils so as to cater to the needs of the exporting com munity in an effective manner.

(e) Since no general restructuring of Export Promotion Councils is considered to be necessary, no such proposal is receiving attention of the Government.

Statement-I

List of Export Promotion Councils

(i) Apprael Export Promotion Council (AEPC), New Delhi.

(ii) Basic Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals and Cosmetics Export Promotion Council (CHEMEXCIL), Mumbai.

(iii) Cashew Export Promotion Council, Kochi.

(iv) Carpet Export Promotion Council, New Delhi.

(v) Chemicals and Allied Products Export Promotion Council (CAPEXCIL), Calcutta.

(vi) Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) Mumbai.

(vii) Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council, New Delhi.

(viii) Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), Cal-cutta.

(ix) Gems & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), Mumbai.

(x) Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, New Delhi.

(xi) Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC), Chennai.

(xii) Indian Silk Export Promotion Council, Mumbai.

(xiii) Council for Leather exports (CLE), Chennai.

(xiv) Overseas Construction Council of India (OCCI), Mumbai.

(xv) Plastics & Lenoleums Ex-port Promotion Council (PLEXICIL), Mumbai.

(xvi) Shellac Export Promotion Council, Calcutta.

(xvii) Sports Goods Export Promotion Council (SGEPC), New Delhi.

(xviii) Synthetic and Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council, Mumbai.

(xix) Wool & Woollens Export Promotion Council, New Delhi.

(xx) The Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL).

Statcmcnt-II

The major functions of the Export Promotion Councils are:—

(a) To provide commercially useful information and assistance to their members in developing and increasing their exports;

(b) to offer professional advice to their members in areas such as technology upgradation, quality and design improvement, standards and specifications, product development, innovation, etc.;

(c) to organise visits of delegations of its members abroad to exports overseas market opportunities;

(d) to organise participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, and buyer-seller meets in India and abroad;

(e) to promote interaction between the exporting community and the Government both at the Central and State levels; and

(f) to build a statistical base and provide date on the exports and imports of the country, exports and imports of their members, as well as other relevant international trade data.